

Milwaukee's Survive Alive House



2005-06 Annual Report





The Reason

In the fall of 1987, a series of house fires devastated Milwaukee by claiming the lives of 35 people, 18 of whom were children. In response to this tragic loss of life, Mayor Henry Maier appointed a task force to explore ways in which the Milwaukee community could prevent future fire fatalities.

By December, the task force approved a proposal to create a fire safety program with input from the Milwaukee Fire Department, Milwaukee Public Schools Recreation Division, Metropolitan Builders Association, Milwaukee Department of Building and Inspection, and the Milwaukee Common Council.

The Milwaukee Fire Education Center's Survive Alive House, located at 2059 S. 20th Street, officially opened its doors in February of 1992. Since then, the house has been jointly managed by the Milwaukee Fire Department and the Milwaukee Public Schools Recreation Division. Milwaukee firefighters, along with part-time MPS Recreation staff and volunteers, manage the program's daily operations.



The background of the page is a large, solid black silhouette of a house. It features a steep gabled roof, a single chimney on the right side, and a rectangular base. The title 'The Program' is centered within the upper portion of the house's roof area.

The Program

The Survive Alive House is located in a former MPS fieldhouse, which also contains a classroom facility. The house itself contains two replica bedrooms, complete with beds, dressers, and toys. The house is equipped with electronically controlled "hot doors," fire simulation lighting, and non-toxic smoke.

Before visiting the Survive Alive House, children receive instruction on fire safety and prevention from their teachers. Upon their arrival, students watch a video in the center's classroom and discuss what they have learned with Milwaukee firefighters.

The lessons are reinforced when students enter the house and take part in a fire simulation. As the rooms fill with non-toxic smoke, a smoke detector is sounded. The children are then instructed to roll out of bed and crawl to the door. If the door is warm, the children must escape through the window. Once all of the children have escaped and arrived at their meeting place, one student is instructed to call 911 on the pay phone, which runs directly to the Survive Alive control room.

Following their visit, a post test is administered at the students' school to determine their retention of fire safety skills.

Every second and fifth grader in MPS visits the Survive Alive House each year, and the program is available to other school systems, home schoolers, government agencies, and community groups. Over 25 non-MPS schools visit the Survive Alive House annually.



The background of the entire page is a black silhouette of a house. It features a large triangular roof, a chimney on the right side, and a rectangular base. The title 'The Impact' is centered within the roof area.

The Impact

Milwaukee's Survive Alive House was built with the generous support of businesses, schools, and community leaders. Since its inception in 1992, the program has taught over 200,000 children how to prevent and escape fires. As the program reaches more students, the city of Milwaukee continues to record a dramatic decrease in the number of fire-related fatalities of children between the ages of 7 and 17.

During the 2005-06 school year, the Survive Alive House hosted 350 programs, serving 15,210 children and 1,412 adults.

In June of 2006, the Survive Alive Foundation, a 501(c)3 non-profit charity, recorded assets valued at \$207,063.38. The majority of these assets are invested in certificates of deposit, intended to fund future maintenance costs, outreach efforts, and educational materials. All staffing costs are covered by the Milwaukee Fire Department and the Milwaukee Public Schools Recreation Division.

The Survive Alive Foundation has a strong commitment to the well-being of Milwaukee's children and intends to maintain the high quality of its fire safety program for years to come. As the Survive Alive House ages, the Foundation is preparing for major capital improvements, which will require additional public support.

If you wish to support the work of Milwaukee's Survive Alive House as a volunteer, board member, or donor, please call (414) 385-3240.



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